

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

Claim 1 (Currently Amended): A screening method comprising the steps of:
~~cutting off two corners facing each other of each of only single corner square cells~~
facing each other on a square grid to form non-regular hexagonal cells;
combining plural of said hexagonal cells into one combined single halftone cell; and
setting threshold values for respective grids of said single halftone cell to express a
halftone.

Claim 2 (Currently Amended): A screening method ~~as defined in claim 1, further~~
comprising the ~~step~~ steps of:
cutting off two corners facing each other of square cells on a square grid to form non-
regular hexagonal cells;
combining plural of said hexagonal cells into one combined single halftone cell;
setting threshold values for respective grids of said single halftone cell to express a
halftone; and
combining plural single halftone cells arranged on said square grid without any gaps
therebetween; and
wherein a distance between respective threshold value setting start pixels in adjacent
halftone cells is made as equal as possible.

Claim 3 (Currently Amended): A screening method ~~as defined in claim 1, comprising~~
the steps of:
cutting off two corners facing each other of square cells on a square grid to form non-
regular hexagonal cells;

combining plural of said hexagonal cells into one combined single halftone cell;
setting threshold values for respective grids of said single halftone cell to express a
halftone; and

wherein in said setting step the set threshold values for each of said respective plural hexagonal cells constructing said single halftone cell are not the same.

Claim 4 (Original): A screening method as defined in claim 2,
wherein in said setting step the set threshold values for each of said respective plural hexagonal cells constructing said single halftone cell are not the same.

Claim 5 (Currently Amended): A screening method comprising the steps of:
~~cutting off two corners facing each other~~ each of only single corner of square cells
facing each other on a square grid to form non-regular hexagonal cells;
combining plural of said hexagonal cells into a combined single halftone cell; and
setting respective different threshold values for respective grids of said single halftone cell to express a halftone.

Claim 6 (Currently Amended): A screening method ~~as defined in claim 5, further~~
comprising the step steps of:

cutting off two corners facing each other of square cells on a square grid to form non-regular hexagonal cells;
combining plural of said hexagonal cells into a combined single halftone cell;
setting respective different threshold values for respective grids of said single halftone cell to express a halftone; and

combining plural single halftone cells arranged on said square grid without any gaps therebetween; and

wherein a distance between respective threshold value setting start pixels in adjacent halftone cells is made as equal as possible.

Claim 7 (Currently Amended): A screening method ~~as defined in claim 5, comprising~~ the steps of:

cutting off two corners facing each other of square cells on a square grid to form non-regular hexagonal cells;

combining plural of said hexagonal cells into a combined single halftone cell;

setting respective different threshold values for respective grids of said single halftone cell to express a halftone; and

wherein in the setting step the set threshold values for each of said respective plural hexagonal cells constructing said single halftone cell are not the same.

Claim 8 (Previously Presented): A screening method as defined in claim 6, wherein in the setting step the set threshold values for each of said respective plural hexagonal cells constructing said single halftone cell are not the same.

Claim 9 (Previously Presented): A screening method comprising the steps of:

cutting off two corners facing each other of square cells on a square grid to form non-regular hexagonal cells;

combining plural of said hexagonal cells into a combined single halftone cell; and

dividing an interior of each of said respective hexagonal cells to form respective sub-matrices.

Claim 10 (Original): A screening method as defined in claim 9,
wherein in said dividing step each sub-matrix is employed for an auxiliary dot.

Claim 11 (Original): A screening method as defined in claim 9,
wherein said sub-matrices in said hexagonal cells are not all of a same shape.

Claim 12 (Original): A screening method as defined in claim 10,
wherein said sub-matrices in said hexagonal cells are not all of a same shape.

Claim 13 (Currently Amended): A screening apparatus comprising:
hexagonal cell forming means for cutting off two corners facing each other of each of
only single corner square cells facing each other on a square grid to form non-regular
hexagonal cells;
halftone cell forming means for combining plural of said hexagonal cells into a
combined single halftone cell; and
threshold value setting means for setting threshold values for respective grids of said
single halftone cell to express a halftone.

Claim 14 (Currently Amended): A screening apparatus ~~as defined in claim 13, further~~
comprising:

hexagonal cell forming means for cutting off two corners facing each other of square
cells on a square grid to form non-regular hexagonal cells;
halftone cell forming means for combining plural of said hexagonal cells into a
combined single halftone cell;

threshold value setting means for setting threshold values for respective grids of said single halftone cell to express a halftone; and

means for combining plural of said halftone cells arranged on said square grid without any gaps therebetween; and

wherein a distance between respective threshold value setting start pixels in adjacent halftone cells is made as equal as possible.

Claim 15 (Currently Amended): A screening apparatus as defined in claim 13,
comprising:

hexagonal cell forming means for cutting off two corners facing each other of square cells on a square grid to form non-regular hexagonal cells;

halftone cell forming means for combining plural of said hexagonal cells into a combined single halftone cell; and

threshold value setting means for setting threshold values for respective grids of said single halftone cell to express a halftone; and

wherein in the threshold value setting means the set threshold values for each of said respective plural hexagonal cells constructing said single halftone cell are not the same.

Claim 16 (Original): A screening apparatus as defined in claim 14,
wherein in the threshold value setting means the set threshold values for each of said respective plural hexagonal cells constructing said single halftone cell are not the same.

Claim 17 (Currently Amended): A screening apparatus comprising:

hexagonal cell forming means for cutting off two corners facing each other of each of only single corner square cells facing each other on a square grid to form non-regular hexagonal cells;

halftone cell forming means for combining plural of said hexagonal cells into a combined single halftone cell; and

threshold values setting means for setting respective different threshold values to the respective grids of said single halftone cell to express a halftone.

Claim 18 (Currently Amended): A screening apparatus ~~as defined in claim 17, further~~ comprising:

hexagonal cell forming means for cutting off two corners facing each other of square cells on a square grid to form non-regular hexagonal cells;

halftone cell forming means for combining plural of said hexagonal cells into a combined single halftone cell;

threshold values setting means for setting respective different threshold values to the respective grids of said single halftone cell to express a halftone; and

means for combining plural of said halftone cells arranged on said square grid without any gaps therebetween; and

wherein a distance between respective threshold value setting start pixels in adjacent halftone cells is made as equal as possible.

Claim 19 (Currently Amended): A screening apparatus ~~as defined in claim 17,~~
comprising:

hexagonal cell forming means for cutting off two corners facing each other of square
cells on a square grid to form non-regular hexagonal cells;

halftone cell forming means for combining plural of said hexagonal cells into a
combined single halftone cell; and

threshold values setting means for setting respective different threshold values to the
respective grids of said single halftone cell to express a halftone; and

wherein in the threshold value setting means the set threshold values for each of said
respective plural hexagonal cells constructing said single halftone cell are not the same.

Claim 20 (Original): A screening apparatus as defined in claim 18,
wherein in the threshold value setting means the set threshold values for each of said
respective plural hexagonal cells constructing said single halftone cell are not the same.

Claim 21 (Previously Presented): A screening apparatus comprising:
hexagonal cell forming means for cutting off two corners facing each other of square
cells on a square grid to form non-regular hexagonal cells;
halftone cell forming means for combining plural of said hexagonal cells into a
combined single halftone cell; and
sub-matrix forming means for dividing an interior of each of said respective
hexagonal cells to form sub-matrices.

Claim 22 (Original): A screening apparatus as defined in claim 21, wherein each sub-
matrix is employed for an auxiliary dot.

Claim 23 (Original): A screening apparatus as defined in claim 21,
wherein said sub-matrices in said hexagonal cells are not all of a same shape.

Claim 24 (Original): A screening apparatus as defined in claim 22,
wherein said sub-matrices in said hexagonal cells are not all of a same shape.

Claim 25 (Currently Amended): A screening method comprising the steps of:
cutting off ~~two corners facing each other of each of only single corner square cells~~
facing each other on a square grid to form non-regular hexagonal cells; and
combining plural of said hexagonal cells into a combined single halftone cell.

Claim 26 (Currently Amended): A screening apparatus comprising:
hexagonal cell forming means for cutting off ~~two corners facing each other of each of~~
only single corner square cells facing each other on a square grid to form non-regular
hexagonal cells; and
halftone cell forming means for combining plural of said hexagonal cells into a
combined single halftone cell.

Claim 27 (Previously Presented): A screening method comprising the steps of:
cutting off two corners facing each other of square cells on a square grid to form non-
regular hexagonal cells;
combining plural of said hexagonal cells into one combined single halftone cell;
setting threshold values for respective grids of said single halftone cell to express a
halftone;

combining plural single halftone cells arranged on said square grid without any gaps therebetween; and

wherein respective threshold value setting start pixels in adjacent halftone cells are not aligned in either horizontal or vertical directions.

Claim 28 (Previously Presented): A screening method as defined in claim 27, wherein in said setting step the set threshold values for each of said respective plural hexagonal cells constructing said single halftone cell are not the same.

Claim 29 (Previously Presented): A screening method comprising the steps of:
cutting off two corners facing each other of square cells on a square grid to form non-regular hexagonal cells;

combining plural of said hexagonal cells into a combined single halftone cell;

setting respective different threshold values for respective grids of said single halftone cell to express a halftone;

combining plural single halftone cells arranged on said square grid without any gaps therebetween; and

wherein respective threshold value setting start pixels in adjacent halftone cells are not aligned in either horizontal or vertical directions.

Claim 30 (Previously Presented): A screening method as defined in claim 29, wherein in the setting step the set threshold values for each of said respective plural hexagonal cells constructing said single halftone cell are not the same.

Claim 31 (Previously Presented): A screening apparatus comprising:

hexagonal cell forming means for cutting off two corners facing each other of square cells on a square grid to form non-regular hexagonal cells;

halftone cell forming means for combining plural of said hexagonal cells into a combined single halftone cell;

threshold value setting means for setting threshold values for respective grids of said single halftone cell to express a halftone;

means for combining plural of said halftone cells arranged on said square grid without any gaps therebetween; and

wherein respective threshold value setting start pixels in adjacent halftone cells are not aligned in either horizontal or vertical directions.

Claim 32 (Previously Presented): A screening apparatus as defined in claim 31, wherein in the threshold value setting means the set threshold values for each of said respective plural hexagonal cells constructing said single halftone cell are not the same.

Claim 33 (Previously Presented): A screening apparatus comprising:

hexagonal cell forming means for cutting off two corners facing each other of square cells on a square grid to form non-regular hexagonal cells;

halftone cell forming means for combining plural of said hexagonal cells into a combined single halftone cell;

threshold values setting means for setting respective different threshold values to the respective grids of said single halftone cell to express a halftone;

means for combining plural of said halftone cells arranged on said square grid without any gaps therebetween; and

wherein respective threshold value setting start pixels in adjacent halftone cells are not aligned in either horizontal or vertical directions.

Claim 34 (Previously Presented): A screening apparatus as defined in claim 33,
wherein in the threshold value setting means the set threshold values for each of said respective plural hexagonal cells constructing said single halftone cell are not the same.
